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United Nations Children's Fund
Executive Board
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Report of the Executive Director of the United Nations Children's Fund

Annual report to the Economic and Social Council***

Summary

The present report covers a wide range of issues arising from the decisions of the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly, and provides a UNICEF perspective on these issues of system-wide interest. The report was finalized prior to the discussions on the triennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system (TCPR), which took place during the fifty-ninth session of the General Assembly. It therefore reflects implementation of Assembly resolution 56/201 of 21 December 2001 and supplements the synopsis of the detailed analysis of the implementation of resolution 56/201 contained in the Secretary-General's report on the TCPR (A/59/85-E/2004/68), submitted to the Council at its substantive session of 2004. This report also takes into account other reform activities being carried out by UNICEF related to those mandated by the TCPR, and includes a section on the follow-up to international conferences.

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The report is intended to be both informational and analytical; to describe actions taken and to stimulate discussion on actions to be taken; to serve as a document in its own right and to complement similar reports by other members of the United Nations Development Group Executive Committee; and to respond to priority concerns as related by delegations in their discussion of the Executive Director's 2004 annual report (E/ICEF/2004/4). The need to cover this broad range of requirements in a single document has necessitated a number of editorial decisions on emphasis and approach. It is anticipated that issues requiring a more detailed presentation or additional analysis and prescription will be the focus of discussions by the Executive Board, the outcome of which will be reflected in the Board's annual report to the Council. Issues of a substantive programmatic nature are covered in more detail in the Executive Director's annual report on progress made under the medium-term strategic plan, to be submitted to the Board at its annual session, or in other programmatic documentation.

This report, together with an addendum containing the comments made thereon by the members of the Executive Board, will be submitted to the Economic and Social Council for consideration at its substantive session of 2005.

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I. Implementation of the reform programme of the Secretary-General and the provisions of the triennial policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system

A. Structures and mechanisms

1. The United Nations Development Group (UNDG), now consisting of 25 full members and five observers, met three times in 2004, while the four-member Executive Committee (consisting of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), UNICEF and the World Food Programme (WFP)), met five times. While there is a clear rationale for a body comprising all United Nations agencies with an interest in field-level operations, the large number of members and their widely divergent sizes, mandates, roles and interests continue to pose a challenge. While the smaller Executive Committee generally has achieved the ambitious targets of its work plan for the year, the full UNDG, which includes many agencies with separate governance structures or without adequate resources to participate in New York-based working groups, has operated largely as a forum for information exchange.

2. The Greentree Retreat, a private meeting of the Executive Heads of the UNDG Executive Committee held in early 2004, produced the Greentree Report, which underlined the importance of accelerating the reform process and identified seven main priorities for ongoing action. This document marked an important shift in United Nations reform, as it was the first major multi-agency initiative generated entirely from within the development system and moving beyond the actions called for in intergovernmental resolutions or the Secretary-General's reform initiatives.

3. A specific outcome of the Greentree Retreat was the agreement to establish, on a pilot basis, joint offices for UNDP, UNFPA and UNICEF in two countries with a limited United Nations presence, Cape Verde and Maldives. In those locations, it is envisaged that there will be joint representation of the three agencies and joint operations. A process was established to work out the details, with UNICEF leading in Cape Verde and UNDP in Maldives. In addition, UNICEF has seconded a senior staff member to the United Nations Development Group Office (UNDGO) to lead the headquarters aspects of this process. Full implementation of the two joint offices is anticipated in 2006.

4. The Greentree Retreat also addressed the issue of enhanced UNDG unity in field duty stations, consistent with the agencies working together safely and effectively. A concrete and symbolic step communicated in a joint letter by the heads of the four Executive Committee agencies to their country representatives was the agreement that no agency head at country level will fly a flag on his/her vehicle and if one is required for protocol or safety reasons, all agencies will use the United Nations flag.

5. The concerns which provided the stimulus for the Greentree Retreat also led UNICEF to commission two studies to evaluate its own contribution to United Nations reform and the impact on UNICEF, as well as to the first ever global consultation involving all members of the UNICEF family, held in Dubai in July 2004.

6. The relationship between the Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB) and the UNDG became closer as the High-Level Committee on Programmes (HLCP) addressed the policy dimensions of such issues as follow-up to the Millennium Declaration and other international conferences, and HIV/AIDS and its linkages with food security and governance. The High-Level Committee on Management addressed the development of a comprehensive information and communications strategy for the United Nations system. The Secretary-General underlined the commitment to closer collaboration in field operations when he proposed that the CEB retreat in October review progress in achieving coherence in United Nations system activities at the country level, and consider further steps to maximize collective impact and to ensure the involvement of the system as a whole.

B. Funding for operational activities for development of the United Nations system

7. The fifth pledging event in the context of the multi-year funding framework took place in January 2004. Details were provided in the Executive Director's annual report to the Executive Board, presented at the annual session of 2004 (E/ICEF/2004/9).

8. For the current year, as of 30 September 2004, UNICEF had recorded regular resources income of $433.3 million from government donors and intergovernmental agencies against medium-term financial plan projections of $425 million. Total regular resources income from all sources for 2004 is projected to be $765 million, with the level of government regular resources contributions in line with financial plan estimates. Other resources contributions recorded from Governments were $539 million ($355 million regular, $184 million emergency) against the financial plan projection of $695 million. Total other resources income from all sources was $689 million against the 2004 plan target of $920 million.

9. The Executive Board has discussed several times the importance of increasing the level of regular resources to enable UNICEF to perform its core functions, and to contribute to achieving the goals of the Millennium Declaration and other global commitments. While there has been a positive trend in regular resources levels in the past three years, the continuing decline in the proportion of regular resources to total resources is a source of concern. UNICEF depends on these unrestricted resources for an effective global presence, to provide continuity in its work and to respond to new and emerging needs of children and women, including those related to emergency preparedness and initial response. With regular resources, UNICEF is able to deepen and expand networks of knowledge, experience and partnerships for children everywhere and to promote a human rights approach that puts children at the centre of all actions.

10. **With a view to the predictable and sustained growth of regular resources, UNICEF encourages all Member States, particularly high- and middle-income countries, to increase their annual voluntary contributions to core resources and, for those in a position to do so, to provide multi-year commitments and payment schedules at the pledging event held at the first regular session of the Executive Board.**

C. Capacity-building

11. UNICEF now views capacity development as a broad, multi-pronged programmatic strategy which makes a clear distinction between training activities and this wider approach. In Botswana, for example, the approach has included not only training on children's rights but also assistance for the review of national child-related legislation and the development of a framework and checklists for review of all relevant policies from a children's rights perspective. The Observatory of the Indian Ocean on Child Rights is being developed as a major instrument for monitoring, analysis and advocacy at the regional level. It seeks to support and influence decision-making processes towards "child-friendly" policies in five Indian Ocean countries and to promote the development of strategies and advocacy tools for national authorities, civil society and the international community.

12. Recent evaluations of UNICEF support to capacity-building have identified effective approaches to improving the capacities of community and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to mobilize and interact with public sector authorities on child rights issues and to assist in reforming national policies and laws in favour of children and women. At the local level in Southern Africa, for example, support for the training of community workers and the involvement of peer support groups of people living with AIDS have increased capacities to identify, register and assess the needs of orphaned and vulnerable children and to increase coverage of services for HIV testing, counselling and support.

13. The promotion of capacity-building in emergency and post-conflict situations is a particular challenge. The action plan for children affected by war in Sri Lanka is an example of a multi-partner, multi-sectoral initiative which is formally tied to the national peace process and which seeks solutions to the issue of child soldiers through a broad approach that also addresses such factors as livelihoods and the lack of educational opportunities. One lesson emerging from this experience is the importance of building local capacities for monitoring and addressing a range of child protection issues.

14. An area of intensified effort during 2004 has been the support by UNICEF and other agencies for the development of national plans of action (NPAs) for responding to the growing numbers of orphaned children. A rapid assessment, analysis and planning process has been supported in 17 countries in sub-Saharan Africa through collaboration between the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), UNICEF, WFP and the United States Agency for International Development. Many of these countries shared their emerging action plans at a landmark meeting in South Africa in September 2004, and stressed the importance of prioritized actions, monitoring and evaluation mechanisms, costing and impact analysis, inter-country sharing of experience and high-quality international technical assistance.

15. In the education sector, the challenge of modelling an affordable approach to improving access and quality that puts children at the centre of the learning environment is being addressed through the "child-friendly" schools approach. The evaluation of these experiences indicates the importance of initial, in-depth consultations among stakeholders on the approach, in order to build agreement on expected results, performance indicators and context-specific strategies. Strengthening the capacities of head teachers, gender-sensitization of the curriculum

and the deepening of school-community relations have also emerged as priority actions.

16. As part of the overall efforts of the United Nations agencies in supporting implementation of the Millennium Declaration, UNICEF has increased its engagement with the national process of formulating poverty reduction strategies (PRSs) and other policy frameworks, with the aim of strengthening capacities to assess priority issues for children and address them in appropriate ways. In Lesotho, UNICEF and Save the Children Fund (United Kingdom) have promoted the work of a thematic group on children and young people, which produced a position paper for use in the drafting of the PRS. In Uganda, in response to a health sector review mission, UNICEF, UNFPA and the World Health Organization (WHO) have supported the Ministry of Health in undertaking a national assessment of the availability and quality of emergency obstetric care. This has provided the basis for a costed strategy for increasing institutional deliveries and access to emergency care and for greater prioritization by the Government of this area within the sector-wide approach (SWAp) for health.

17. Reliable, age-specific and disaggregated data are essential for effective planning and monitoring for PRSs and other national initiatives related to goals for children. In support of national capacities for monitoring progress towards the Millennium Development Goals, including the many child-specific targets and indicators which are included in this agenda, the UNDG agencies have adopted a cost-effective approach in *DevInfo*, a tool adapted from the *ChildInfo* technology developed by UNICEF. With support from UNICEF and in coordination with the UNDG, workshops for the introduction of *DevInfo* have taken place in all regions, involving more than 400 national professionals and United Nations staff from over 120 countries. Since July 2004, Governments and United Nations country teams in over 30 countries have taken steps to establish a national socio-economic database using this technology. The Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys (MICS) and Demographic and Health Surveys which are planned in many countries in 2005 will further strengthen capacities for national and decentralized planning, and will help to further "populate" statistical databases like *DevInfo*.

D. The resident coordinator system

18. UNICEF has played a lead role in strengthening the resident coordinator (RC)/humanitarian coordinator (HC) system in three key ways. First, UNICEF has encouraged competent staff to undergo the assessment and apply for these posts. Secondly, it has participated actively in the regular redesign and refinement of the competency assessment process based on lessons learned. Finally, UNICEF has insisted that RCs lacking the specialized skills and experience needed in the humanitarian coordination role be replaced by more suitable candidates.

19. Presently, four UNICEF staff members (two men and two woman) function as RCs, with one other staff member serving as long-term RC a.i.. UNICEF also nominated five candidates for the assessment in 2004. Four UNICEF staff members are currently attached to UNDGO, including the Director. Participation in and contribution to the RC system is now a core responsibility of UNICEF representatives and senior managers at the country level. Nevertheless, the low

number of UNICEF RCs is cause for concern and interviews with those who have served in this function will provide guidance for increasing interest among staff.

20. At the country level, UNICEF staff have been prominent in leading theme groups organized around particular issues. However, evidence to date suggests that the majority of these groups are not fully effective and should provide greater returns for the effort that goes into them. The most effective groups have been those that are problem-driven and informal, and that focus on results over process. In addition to emergency or disaster management, the consistently most useful theme groups have been those on HIV/AIDS and, occasionally, education and health. A significant benefit of theme groups has been their potential as a venue for promoting UNICEF priorities.

21. It is now accepted standard practice that in countries with a Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG), there will be a Deputy Special Representative who is responsible for development and humanitarian issues and acts as RC/HC. UNICEF and other United Nations agencies generally are consulted on the latter appointments although they have no role in the selection of the SRSGs. While relations between the SRSGs leading peace-keeping missions mandated by the Security Council and the United Nations country teams are generally collaborative and constructive, there can be problems of overlap or, potentially worse, lack of coverage.

22. UNICEF senior managers are being called upon to play key roles within the RC system in post-conflict and transition countries. In addition to the many situations where staff provided sectoral leadership during the needs assessment and subsequent implementation, UNICEF represented UNDG in the overall needs assessments for reconstruction in Haiti and Iraq. UNICEF also provided the Deputy Humanitarian Coordinator for Darfur, Sudan on a short-term basis and headed the United Nations coordination mechanism in Liberia.

E. Common country programming

23. The UNDG work plan for simplification and harmonization of operational policies and procedures, called for in General Assembly resolution 56/2001, was completed in accordance with deadlines established by the Assembly and the Secretary-General's reform initiatives. UNDG members have now adopted common country programming instruments and procedures, with the Executive Committee agencies adopting common instruments for planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation, and specialized agencies adopting the common instruments for planning, monitoring and evaluation. The UNDG common country programming process represents a milestone towards more effective programming and reduction of transaction costs for national counterparts. UNICEF was at the forefront of developing and rolling out these instruments.

24. During 2004, the process of developing country programmes on the basis of a prior agreed United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) was significantly enhanced with the use of an improved results matrix and harmonized results-based terminology. Agencies developing country programmes now hold one common joint strategy meeting with the Government, which provides a forum for the Government and United Nations agencies collectively to validate the UNDAF results matrix and country programme strategies.

25. The new common country programming process is being implemented progressively as countries roll out their new programme cycles. In 2004, the Executive Board considered new country programmes for 15 countries that made up the first group of roll-out countries applying the full common country programming process. These 15 county programme documents (CPDs) were developed on the basis of the Common Country Assessments (CCAs) and UNDAFs prepared for the countries during the previous year, including a results matrix which ensures that agencies' programmes and projects are complementary and fully aligned with planned UNDAF results. In all 15 countries, the linkages between the UNDAF, draft CPDs and country programme action plan are evident. The roll-out will now continue with a further 19 countries starting their programmes in 2006 and 39 more in 2007.

26. The Joint Programming Guidance Note issued by UNDP in March 2004 set out a detailed programmatic and operational framework that was endorsed by all UNDG members, including the specialized agencies. The 15 United Nations country teams that had programmes approved in 2004 were able to apply the joint programming guidelines as they developed their country programmes and projects. UNICEF participated fully in the development of the guidelines and, in addition, has issued detailed supplementary guidelines to its staff, emphasizing the UNICEF commitment to joint programming and laying out a step-by-step orientation on how country office staff can administer joint programmes using the UNICEF Programme Manager System.

27. The experience of these countries also shows that there are other benefits to UNICEF from the common country programming process. UNICEF has made an increasingly significant contribution to national plans, PRSs and SWAps as an integral part of the overall contribution of the United Nations system to these efforts. Specifically, for example, UNICEF has helped to develop realistic work plans at subnational levels, link budgets to goals and incorporate human rights, gender-based and participatory approaches, especially emphasizing disparity reduction.

28. Experience is showing that country teams will need to adopt a more strategic and results-oriented approach if the results matrix is to realize its full potential for linking the UNDAF objectives and results more closely with preparation of individual agencies' country programmes. Country programmes in turn need to make strategic choices to concentrate the efforts of the United Nations system in fewer areas for enhanced effectiveness. During 2004, proposals were produced for strengthening the accountability of UNDG over the UNDAF results matrix, with enhanced responsibilities for the RC and regional directors.

29. An important lesson learned is that the quality of the process and product is directly related to the leadership exercised by the RC and the other agency heads at country level. Concerns remain that the process is too time-consuming and that the varying capacities of country teams and member agencies need to be taken into greater account. Evidence to date shows that the specialized agencies, even if not using a country programme approach, are increasingly participating in and contributing to the CCA/UNDAF and to joint programmes and the monitoring and evaluation of the UNDAF.

30. During 2004, UNICEF continued its active role in the process of updating and improving the guidance as well as the support provided to United Nations country

teams. UNICEF staff chaired the UNDG Working Group on Quality Support and Assurance, leading the review and dissemination of lessons learned from ongoing processes. Issues and actions emerging from the Secretary-General's reform proposals were also taken into account by this group. All guidelines continue to be regarded as "works in progress" supplemented by lessons learned, best practices and good examples from ongoing in-country work, all of which are now available on the UNDG web site (www.undg.org).

31. An important aspect of the support process in 2004 was the role given to the Country Programme Support Group, which is mandated to maintain global oversight of the common country programming roll-out. This was especially important given the new instruments and procedures being introduced. With the support of UNDGO, the UNDG Working Group on Training and the United Nations System Staff College regularly reviewed progress in each country against a set of key milestones including training activities, steps in the review and support process and completion dates. While these headquarters-oriented groups will continue to accompany the roll-out process from a global perspective, it is expected that regional entities will take on an increasing role in monitoring the process in their regions and in organizing appropriate action in support of countries and resolving specific problems and issues as they emerge.

32. Timely guidance, training and quality assurance support were also provided in subregional workshops for the 39 country teams that will be embarking on the CCA/UNDAF process in 2005. Through UNDG, UNICEF has been fully active in this process at all levels, by planning with other Executive Committee agencies and UNDGO at headquarters; making inputs into the design and content of the workshops, and into training materials and modules; providing resource persons as facilitators; and providing regional quality support and assurance mechanisms.

33. A serious attempt was made in the UNDG common country programming workshops to better incorporate the human rights-based approach to programming. Translating human rights principles and tools into concrete programming instruments remains a challenge. The human rights- based approach to programming represents a unifying and distinctive contribution for which the United Nations system has a special competence. UNICEF is recognized within UNDG as having a special capacity in this area, and will continue to make a substantive contribution.

34. Similarly, a start was made in 2004 on the integration of issues arising from conflict into common country programming. Given the high number of countries affected by conflict, many of them among the poorest, this process needs to be developed and improved in 2005. Increasingly, the UNDG, the Executive Committee on Peace and Security and the Executive Committee on Humanitarian Affairs are working together to provide support to countries in these situations.

35. Support and training at country level includes the UNDAF prioritization retreats. All countries preparing an UNDAF now have such a retreat, supported by UNDG through the Staff College and its own pool of trained resource persons. UNICEF provides resource persons and facilitators for these inter-agency support and training missions. There is a recognized need to invest in these events and to monitor the results to ensure that country teams are making real choices to strategize and to prioritize activities.

36. "Lead agencies" in each region provided coordinated technical support to the country teams, particularly for reviews of draft CCAs and UNDAFs. However, the overall quality of support by regional entities still varies too much between regions.

37. The UNDG Programme Group was chaired by UNICEF in 2004 and, in addition to providing oversight and policy guidance to its working groups (including those concerned with quality support and assurance, country programme support, knowledge management and interaction with the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development/Development Assistance Committee, it began to emphasize more substantive issues, reviewing progress towards the Millennium Development Goals, and working to ensure that technical advice on the Goals is available to country teams.

38. Regional oversight, including mediation on conflicting views by country team members and overall final quality assessment, still needs improvement. While the headquarters-level quality support and assurance system produced some "good practices" notes on CCAs and UNDAFs, this work was too often constrained by the lack of feedback from regional offices and bureaux on the assessed quality of finalized CCAs and UNDAFs. Ad hoc analyses of CCAs, UNDAFs and results matrices indicate the need for improvement, for instance, in terms of depth of analysis and focus of programme cooperation, and the need for more systematic identification of good examples, good practices and lessons learned. This will be a priority task in 2005.

39. Problems that continue to require resolution are posed by variations in the coverage of agencies' assigned regions (when the effort is made to provide coordinated regional support and oversight), and the difference in authority and accountability between regional bureaux located at headquarters, regional offices located in the regions and regional technical structures.

40. In 2005, harmonized modalities for resource transfers, with common country-level procedures for cash transfers to Government and reporting, will be introduced in selected pilot countries. A major change for UNICEF operations at country level which is scheduled for global implementation, this reform will reduce transaction costs for government counterparts.

F. Common premises and common services

41. While the objective of common premises to promote a more unified presence at country level in a cost-effective manner remains valid, security and compliance with minimum operating security standards have become priority considerations in the selection of office accommodation. At present, there are 58 officially designated United Nations Houses worldwide, with two added this year in Panama and Nigeria. The UNDG Working Group on Common Premises and Services continues to offer guidance to country teams and fields technical missions to supplement written guidance for country teams preparing common premises proposals.

42. Updated operational guidelines for the implementation of common services, placing greater emphasis on practical guidance for procedural aspects, were sent to all country teams in 2004. These guidelines will facilitate more widespread introduction of country-level common services and cover principles of good management, criteria for selection of services, elements for an inter-agency common

services agreement, information on budgeting and cost apportionment, and performance measurement indicators. UNDG now maintains a global database of common services at the country level.

43. A new inter-agency common services programme was launched in January 2004, focusing on learning development of the field-level operations management teams, common services tools, results tracking, regional implementation and enhanced internet-based support. A workshop was held in Bangkok in October 2004 to train regional common services expert teams.

G. Monitoring and evaluation

44. UNICEF has continued to strengthen the evaluation function and community in the United Nations system, largely through the United Nations Evaluation Group. In July 2004, 14 United Nations entities participated in a workshop, chaired by UNICEF, that began to define evaluation norms and standards for the United Nations system and its partners. These norms and standards will strengthen the evaluation function, support the management of evaluations and serve as a set of assessment criteria for reviewing final evaluation reports. They will set standards for evaluation reports that reflect key approaches in development and humanitarian practices, specifically results-based and human rights-based approaches to programming.

45. UNICEF has continued to strengthen the capacities of regional and international evaluation associations, which play an increasing role in facilitating professional exchanges among evaluators from the public and private sectors, NGOs, academic institutions and international organizations. UNICEF has provided financial support for the formation and development of these evaluation associations and its staff have participated in key international meetings.

46. UNICEF also participated in an inter-agency monitoring and evaluation working group to prepare guidelines for terms of reference for country-specific UNDAF evaluations. These evaluations will be joint United Nations reviews, conducted with national partners, of the overall results expected from United Nations cooperation in the country, to inform the design of the next UNDAF programme cycle and of individual agencies' country programmes. The main users of the evaluations will be the UNDAF partners — the country team and the Government of the programme country. The guidelines set out the general purposes and objectives of the UNDAF evaluation and suggest illustrative key questions and basic methods and organizational principles. Each country team will then draft its own terms of reference and tailor the exercise to the country's specific context.

47. UNICEF has recognized that while gaps in technical competency are an issue, the key criteria for successful outcomes is attention by management to the results of evaluations. Therefore, a plan of action has been developed to promote: (a) greater involvement of senior managers in articulating the demand for evaluation at each level of the organization; (b) greater accountability for response and follow-up to evaluations; and (c) focused use of capacity-building in resolving key capacity bottlenecks. These measures will not only improve the quality of reporting but should also foster a better use of evaluations for decision-making and learning.

H. Gender mainstreaming

48. UNICEF continues to mainstream a gender perspective into its work as part of the human rights-based approach to programming. To ensure a holistic programmatic approach to reducing gender disparities, UNICEF is increasingly undertaking a multi-sectoral approach, shifting away from small-scale projects and emphasizing such systemic issues as legislative reform, policy support, attitudinal and behavioural change, capacity-building, monitoring and reporting.

49. Ensuring girls' rights to accessible, quality education has been boosted by the "25 by 2005" acceleration strategy aimed at gender parity in education for a group of priority countries. In these countries, there is a shift towards broader, sector-wide approaches that rely on strong partnerships, common strategies, joint planning and pooled resources. New areas of endeavour include campaigns to abolish school fees and an emphasis on children orphaned or made vulnerable by HIV/AIDS.

50. While there has been significant progress in reducing gender gaps in enrolment rates for primary education, the disparities involving access, completion rates and quality remain concerns. In response, UNICEF is undertaking gender reviews of textbooks and curricula in many countries and engaging in advocacy to raise awareness of qualitative manifestations of gender bias. Recognizing the importance of action in early childhood for narrowing the gender gap, measures to prepare girls for school were incorporated into early learning initiatives in 38 countries.

51. In 2003, UNICEF undertook a study on linkages between gender-based violence and the priorities of the medium-term strategic plan (MTSP), and how to address them through country programmes. Aspects of gender-based violence which are now being addressed both through global advocacy efforts and in cooperation with partners at the national level include domestic violence, sexual exploitation and abuse, trafficking in women and children and harmful traditional practices, such as female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C). Complementary strategies, include media and advocacy campaigns, legislative reform, counselling and rehabilitation services, and capacity-building and awareness-raising of police, judges and other officials to ensure the proper enforcement of existing laws. Three quarters of UNICEF country offices now work to counter violence through awareness-raising and behavioural change activities.

52. Other strategies include supporting legislative reform, creating NPAs on violence against women and children, policy development and advocacy and capacity-building at different levels. In Bangladesh, for instance, UNICEF supported the preparation of the national plan against the sexual abuse and exploitation of children including trafficking. With community mobilization, UNICEF supported NGOs in encouraging 564 villages in Senegal to make public declarations against FGM/C in 2002-2003 alone.

53. Since globally, more than one half of all people living with HIV are females, addressing the rights of girls and young women is fundamental to turning the tide on HIV/AIDS. Areas of focus for programming include HIV prevention and life-skills education among young people, prevention of mother-to-child transmission and support for children and families living with HIV/AIDS. UNICEF has led the Secretary-General's task force on women, girls and HIV/AIDS in Southern Africa, which has served to catalyse and intensify action and to position the issue as a priority for the United Nations system, Governments and civil society.

54. In early 2004, a consultation organized by the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) on gender-responsive budgets concluded that significant progress had been made since 2001 and identified future directions. Complementarities were found between the strengths of UNIFEM in community-based work, advocacy and awareness-raising and the work of UNICEF in identifying economic and social policy options, engaging with finance ministries and parliamentarians, and increasing the awareness of the Committee on the Rights of the Child on budget-related issues. UNICEF and UNIFEM will continue their collaboration in this key area.

55. In unstable environments, the goal of UNICEF is to ensure that violent, extreme and often sudden threats to the rights of children and women and to the integrity and stability of the family are countered by advocacy and action for their special protection and care. The revised UNICEF Core Commitments for Children in emergencies include a strengthened commitment to monitor, report on, advocate and communicate on the situation of children and women. This includes conducting a rapid situation assessment and establishing initial monitoring systems, including on severe or systematic abuse, violence and exploitation.

56. UNICEF has been active in ensuring full implementation of the Secretary-General's bulletin on protection from sexual exploitation and sexual abuse (ST/SGB/2003/13), including through training of staff and the appointment of focal points in field offices. UNICEF has contributed to the development of a tool kit of practical guidance to humanitarian actors for the prevention and management of gender-based violence in humanitarian crises.

57. UNICEF has been particularly active in focusing on the specific circumstances of girls associated with fighting forces, which is a crucial concern since programming often ignores the existence of girl soldiers. Another key concern is the prevalence of sexual violence in humanitarian crises, which UNICEF is addressing both through preventive measures and by providing psychosocial trauma services to survivors of sexual and gender-based violence. UNICEF has developed a training package on preventing sexual exploitation and abuse, and is conducting workshops for its staff and partners to further develop their capacities on this important issue. UNICEF has also played a leading role in the development of a code of conduct for humanitarian workers.

58. UNICEF has also advocated for the inclusion of gender-specific responses in peace processes. These programmes have created opportunities for training women counsellors and raising awareness of women's rights among community leaders in camps for internally displaced persons. In Sudan, for instance, a UNICEF programme is building the capacity of grass-roots organizations to protect vulnerable children, and promoting the ratification of international and regional human rights treaties to protect children and women and the harmonization of national laws with those instruments. The programme also supports the creation of a policy environment that supports gender equality, including by establishing gender networks for advocacy and social mobilization and by ensuring that UNICEF partners plan and implement gender-sensitive programmes.

59. UNICEF has further strengthened gender issues in all programme guidance and learning materials to ensure that these issues are raised and fully discussed at all stages of the country programme cycle and preparation of the CCA/UNDAF. Developing greater capacity on gender issues is key to ensuring that the subject is

not marginalized and becomes a core concern for all staff. A step forward was the issuance of a new self-assessment tool to measure progress on gender equality goals in country programmes. The UNICEF gender focal point network was developed to support the integration of gender equality and women's and girls' rights in programmes, strengthen internal networking and share relevant information, experiences and lessons learned. Both this mechanism and gender expertise overall needs to be strengthened. UNICEF is working with the Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality and the inter-agency task force on the CCA/UNDAF and gender to strengthen the implementation of gender equality goals. UNICEF has also supported the development of a resource guide for gender theme groups and experts at the country level.

60. UNICEF also supports the collection of gender-disaggregated data through MICS and other tools as a key strategy for gender-sensitive planning, monitoring and evaluation. At the end of 2003, indicators for harmful traditional practices, such as FGM/C and child marriage, were identified and are now being field tested. In 2005, UNICEF will lead the development of new indicators for child protection, with a focus on measuring violence, including gender-based violence and armed conflict, abuse, neglect, exploitation and discrimination affecting children.

I. Collaboration with the World Bank

61. UNICEF cooperation with the World Bank continued to intensify during 2004 within an overall context of accelerating progress towards the Millennium Development Goals. There is an increased level of recognition and trust between the two organizations for their complementarity and comparative advantages in terms of capacities to provide support at macro and micro levels, to help Governments plan and implement programmes, and to advocate on issues of common concern.

62. A meeting between the Executive Director and the President of the World Bank in February 2004 led to an agreement to enhance cooperation, focusing on several areas where tangible progress could best be achieved by working together. A subsequent meeting between the UNICEF Programme Division and the Bank's Human Development Network resulted in an agreement to accelerate results in the areas of orphans and vulnerable children affected by HIV/AIDS, education and HIV/AIDS, and girls' education, and to collaborate in shifting from limited project interventions to broader multi-sectoral programmes and establishing a new partnership for child survival.

63. The World Bank and UNICEF will co-host a second global partners' forum on orphans and vulnerable children affected by HV/AIDS, focusing on "intensifying the response", in December 2004 in Washington D.C.. They are sharing strategic information about "what works" for children affected by HIV/AIDS and the cost of the response, and producing a sourcebook on how education can support children affected by HIV/AIDS. The joint UNICEF/World Bank initiative on early childhood development and HIV/AIDS continued, with five countries in sub-Saharan Africa developing action plans and proposals to build capacities to address young children affected by HIV/AIDS in the context of broader planning for orphans and vulnerable children.

64. UNICEF and the World Bank agree that HIV/AIDS poses a significant threat to poverty reduction, and therefore should be addressed in national poverty

reduction plans. The two organizations conducted a joint review of how effectively PRSs in Africa are used to promote action for children and young people affected by HIV/AIDS, and are currently looking at influencing revision of PRSs in selected countries to ensure that they address their needs.

65. In joint efforts to accelerate and scale up progress in girls' education, UNICEF and the World Bank are collaborating on a new approach to promoting more equitable and efficient distribution of essential supplies and services to support gender equality and quality education for all. Piloted in Burkina Faso through a joint agreement signed in 2003, the "essential learning package" approach is being extended to a number of other countries in West and Central Africa, including Benin, Central African Republic, Chad, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Guinea, Mali and Niger.

66. UNICEF participates in discussions and decision-making on the Education for All Fast Track Initiative that is managed by the World Bank. The Bank participated in a regional workshop on the potential for education SWAps that was organized by UNICEF and the Asian Development Bank in Hanoi for countries in the East Asia and Pacific region. This is a continuation of UNICEF capacity-building efforts around SWAps that began with a regional workshop for Eastern and Southern Africa.

67. UNICEF and the World Bank have signed a memorandum of understanding on financial management for the use of World Bank trust funds, bridging key operational differences and allowing the two organizations to work together for such projects as demobilization and reintegration of child soldiers in Burundi and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, funded by the Multi-Country Demobilization and Reintegration Program, and eradication of dracunculiasis in West African countries.

68. Internal UNICEF coordination mechanisms for developing and managing the partnership with the World Bank were greatly strengthened through appointment of a Special Adviser to the Executive Director on World Bank issues and the formation of a multidivisional coordination group, which will review policy, programme and operational issues and provide guidance to field offices and headquarters divisions.

69. UNICEF provided its programme and procurement facilities to the World Bank to more effectively use resources for children. UNICEF has been utilizing International Development Association (IDA) credits to build recipient countries' capacities while ensuring effective delivery of services. In addition to the existing cases in Azerbaijan, Bangladesh and Yemen, a new agreement was signed for Sierra Leone to support the Government in implementing a large-scale teacher training programme, which UNICEF has supported through programme formulation and initial training of trainers.

70. The innovative public-private partnership of the IDA "buy-down" mechanism launched in 2003, for which UNICEF provided procurement services, was given the World Bank President's 2004 Award of Excellence for financial innovation and was further extended to procure oral polio vaccine (OPV) in Nigeria and Pakistan. UNICEF is also procuring OPV on a large scale on behalf of the Government of India using a World Bank IDA credit to support polio eradication. An appraisal of the Social Expenditure Management Project loan to the Philippines from the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development indicated that the timely

and efficient procurement and distribution of vaccines, for which UNICEF provided procurement services, resulted in a more successful immunization program.

II. Follow-up to international conferences

71. UNICEF has participated actively with United Nations partners in the system-wide follow up to the Millennium Declaration and to other recent international conferences and General Assembly special sessions. With a mandate encompassing all eight Millennium Development Goals and extensive field experience in programme implementation, UNICEF is able to play a leading role in many parts of the process.

72. Following a mid-term review of the MTSP for 2002-2005, UNICEF is now preparing the next plan, for the period 2006-2009, with a stronger link to the international development agenda, including the Millennium Development Goals and with a clearer articulation of the UNICEF role within the wider United Nations system and reform initiatives.

73. UNICEF is an active participant in the HLCP-led process of reporting on the United Nations system's contribution to the implementation of the Millennium Declaration. This report, stressing the activities of the United Nations in support of national government efforts, will represent the first system-wide attempt to aggregate the contributions of the entire system in an integrated and collective manner. It will address the interrelationships between the three major themes of development and environment, peace and security and human rights and governance. Through its extensive field structure, UNICEF is endeavouring to ensure a high level of country input to this pioneering effort.

74. For a variety of reasons, there has been a moderate but significant upturn in official development assistance (ODA) since adoption of the Monterrey Consensus, and there are indications from donor Governments that this rise will continue. In addition, there have been large contributions from private sources, and recent discussions on an International Finance Facility give further cause for cautious optimism.

75. Most analysis of future expected resource flows see several characteristics: (a) increasing aid to sub-Saharan Africa; (b) increasing programmatic support, including general budget support; (c) a greater concentration of aid on countries with good performance as measured by the World Bank's Country Policy and Institutional Assessment; (d) the share of ODA through multilateral agencies not increasing; (e) funding through global funds remaining significant; (f) increasing "grantization" of IDA funds; and (g) funding for crisis countries remaining significant.

76. UNICEF is responding to these changing conditions in several ways. The country-level reforms being implemented through the UNDG will allow the United Nations system to respond with high-quality, coherent and collective support for nationally owned strategies and programmes. Existing mechanisms allow UNICEF to participate actively in joint programming and joint programme delivery as well as is in some forms of resource pooling arrangements such as SWAps. UNICEF has been able to use its core resources to support government programmes funded through sectoral and general budgetary support. UNICEF has also established an

internal task force to examine various types of partnerships with the potential to leverage resources and results for children.

77. In addition to developing financial mechanisms which make use of the post-Monterrey resource transfer modalities, UNICEF will continue to stress the importance of non-earmarked multilateral contributions. These core funds permit UNICEF to allocate programme resources to countries with the greatest needs, implement programmes to develop institutional capacities and provide adequate technical and administrative support to Governments receiving resources directly through programmatic or general budgetary contributions and through global funds.

78. UNICEF will also continue to highlight its own unique role and that of the United Nations, the importance of funding based on the Millennium Development Goals, the need for resources in transitional situations and the importance of reaching the vulnerable in all societies, including in countries where government policies or institutions may not meet the demands of donors.

79. It is anticipated that the assessment of follow-up to international conferences, particularly the lessons learned from implementation of the Millennium Declaration and the 2005 Summit review, will provide a key input to future reform processes.

Follow-up to the General Assembly Special Session on Children

80. UNICEF has worked with other United Nations agencies to support Member States in integrating the commitments adopted by the Special Session on Children into national plans. These include a series of time-bound goals for children and young people, focusing on the four key areas of promoting healthy lives, providing quality education, protecting children against abuse, exploitation and violence, and combating HIV/AIDS. This agenda reinforces the Millennium Declaration and the Millennium Development Goals, which are also directly relevant to the well-being of children.

81. Momentum has accelerated in the two years following the special session. At least 170 countries have either taken or intend to take action to put the goals into operation. Over 25 countries have completed NPAs for children and more than 50 such plans are under formulation. Some 53 countries are using PRSs as the primary instrument for pursuit of their commitments to children, while others are using national development plans or sector-based approaches.

82. The consultative process to develop these plans has fostered a wide sense of ownership, including in some cases by children and young people themselves. Intergovernmental mechanisms and civil society networks in each region have helped to reinforce the efforts of Governments. The majority of the NPAs for children also recognize the significance of the national reporting process on the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the implications of human rights instruments for the review of national legislation or policies affecting children.

83. There are numerous instances of rapid progress in both individual countries and regions since the Special Session in areas including immunization campaigns, micronutrient supplementation, provision of clean water in emergencies, "back to school" initiatives, programmes for the prevention of HIV transmission from parent to child, and legal reform in areas such as juvenile justice.

84. United Nations agencies have joined efforts to support Member States to realize progress. For example, UNICEF has worked with Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and WFP to support the improvement of food and nutrition security and the provision of care for orphans and other children affected by HIV/AIDS in Southern Africa. The approach has been to empower communities and local institutions to better meet the immediate and long-term nutritional needs of HIV/AIDS-affected children.

85. The United Nations Inter-agency Task Team on Young People has developed a "Guide to Monitoring and Evaluating National HIV/AIDS Prevention Programmes for Young People". The guide provides indicators for national-level surveillance based on consensus among the UNAIDS cosponsors. UNAIDS, UNFPA, UNICEF, and WHO have also provided guidance on effective interventions in HIV prevention in a variety of settings. UNICEF and WHO have worked closely to promote partnerships for safe motherhood and child survival.

86. The strong and natural link between the Millennium Declaration and Development Goals and the commitments of the *A World Fit for Children* plan of action has facilitated planning by Member States. Widespread support for the Goals from United Nations agencies, bilateral agencies and international financial institutions is resulting in greater attention to children's issues. Equally, the goals of the Special Session on Children have sharpened the application of the Goals at the country level, and, in addition, have emphasized the importance and urgency of addressing child protection issues.

87. The participation of children in the development of national plans, a recommendation of the Special Session, is gaining ground in many countries. This increased respect for the right of children to have their views taken into account has led to the greater involvement of children in existing decision-making processes as well as in the establishment of new consultative mechanisms involving young people, with strong collaboration between Member States and civil society organizations.

88. While progress has been encouraging, there remains an urgent need for Members States to take to scale many of the critical interventions for children and poor families which they are undertaking, with the support of United Nations agencies. The picture in the four priority action areas of *A World Fit for Children* indicates that most of the Special Session's goals and the related Millennium Development Goals will only be achieved if there is a major intensification of effort for disadvantaged children and their families across all regions.

89. Several other challenges need to be addressed if the momentum generated by the Special Session on Children is to be maintained. It will be important for such national policy instruments as PRSs and sectoral plans to adequately incorporate and address critical cross-cutting issues affecting children's lives, notably in the areas of protection and HIV/AIDS. A further challenge will be to find ways to sustain the high initial levels of participation among young people and civil society in the follow-up to the Special Session, as countries move into the phases of implementation, monitoring and reporting. Participatory approaches to monitoring and national reporting on the Convention on the Rights of the Child and on the Millennium Development Goals can provide a means of increasing overall mobilization at each level of society in favour of progress for children.